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ABSTRACT

These materials are designed to help concerned people develop and improve the quality of business and economic education programming in their community school system. Cooperative curriculum planning and community resource sharing should involve professional educators and community members in order to obtain the broadest possible consensus for decision-making. There are 11 sections. Section one discusses the importance of economic education to the community, objectives and goals of economic education, and program evaluation. Section two presents facts about economic education. Criteria for economic education programming are presented in section three. Section four contains a sample letter for use with community leaders and groups interested in the development, maintenance, or improvement of local economic education programs. Promotion of economic education is discussed in section five. Section six, "Discussion Starters," contains answers to questions often asked by audiences about economic education programs. Benefits that a school system secures through a community action program are presented in section seven. Section eight contains tips for keeping the community informed. Specific steps for setting up a community economic education program are outlined in section nine. Section ten contains a flow chart for a community action program (CAP). Committees needed for CAP are presented in section 11. (RM)

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1981

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community action kit for business-education cooperation

The materials in this folder are designed to help concerned people develop and improve the quality of business and economic education programming in their community school system.

Cooperative curriculum planning and community resource sharing should involve professional educators and community members in order to obtain the broadest possible consensus for decision-making. Together, they can identify problems and develop improved economic education programming.

We invite you to share these ideas with other people interested in improving business and economic education.

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1.

why is economic education important to the community?

Broad based community support of economic education programming is a long-range investment designed to improve the economic environment in which business operates. Better public understanding of economic facts and concepts promotes better comprehension of the issues affecting the community and its business, labor, government, agricultural, industrial, and educational organizations.

If people are taught to think critically and to analyze the economic benefits and associated costs of proposals affecting personal, public, and business decisions, they will choose the most rational alternative. For this reason business should seek and support economic education programs that raise the economic understanding of students, teachers, and decision makers. Curriculum development and improved teacher preparation are the most effective means of broadening economic education in our schools.

objectives

Community support for economic education is needed to help people:

1. Develop practical skills using economic concepts to identify and review economic alternatives.

2. Understand and objectively analyze economic issues so that they are able to make informed, rational decisions.

application

Economic education programs vary widely in approach, potential audience, means of delivery, and cost. The best programs have a multiplier effect, such as those which train teachers who instruct other teachers and students.

Community support for economic education is aimed at the following publics:

1. teachers and students

Education is a factor of immense value in economic growth, in the improvement of living standards, and in determining the structure and character of the political arrangements which govern the relationships between business and the rest of society.

Economic education embraces the individual as citizen, worker, and consumer. In each role, the individual must make intelligent and critical choices affecting his well-being as well as the well-being of the community.

2. community and general public

Corporate support of economic education can help communities where business and industrial facilities are located.

The economic understanding of the general public has much to do with the environment in which business must function. This climate depends on the public's attitude

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toward business. Attitudes can be improved by the degree of economic knowledge citizens apply to their decisions.

The personal economic needs of each individual form public attitude. An economically literate community understands the relationships which enable business, labor, and government to make the rational decisions needed to achieve ends desired by the people.

program evaluation

Economic education proposals should have realistic objectives, knowledge of the target publics, and should compare well with alternative programs.

1. An economic education program and supporting materials should educate; provide unbiased, factual information; indicate alternative approaches to economic problems, and enable individuals to weigh these options and make judgments based on sound economic principles. The program should be comprehensive and related directly to its audience.

2. Economic education programs should be produced by organizations and institutions that are well-known, reliable, and respected in their field. They should have the resources to develop, implement, and evaluate effective programs, and submit convincing proof of their ability to perform, including success with previous programs.

3. Economic education programs should clearly state the goals for reaching specific, limited audiences. Research should be used whenever possible to measure the effectiveness of the program and determine the cost/benefit analysis of various alternatives available.

4. Economic education programs should provide information to improve and support subsequent program development. Ongoing programs are desirable because they reinforce basic economic concepts.

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2.

facts about economic education

1. More than 150 organizations offer some type of economic education programs or materials to businesses, schools, and community groups.

2. More than half of our states mandate teaching economics in the classroom. Several require consumer economics, career economics, or free-enterprise instruction.

3. Many national trade and professional organizations are involved in economic or business education programming.

4. The Joint Council on Economic Education, with its network of state affiliates and university centers, is recognized by all major educational organizations, the Business Roundtable, the Chamber of Commerce of the United States, and the AFL-CIO as the foremost organization with the ability to deliver economic education programming to local school systems.

To secure additional information about proven methods of developing and implementing economic education in community school systems, contact the Affiliated State Council or nearest Center director listed in the enclosed directory.

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3.

economic education programming should:

1. Provide community leadership representing all economic sectors--business, industry, labor, agriculture, government, educators, civic and community organizations—interested in educational improvement.

2. Provide competent professional staff to cooperate with community and academic leaders and address community issues.

3. Insure that the educational approach and program is recognized as objective, nonpartisan, nonpolitical, academically approved, and responsible. Emphasize objective analysis as the best means of reaching rational conclusions.

4. Choose curricula that cover kindergarten through twelfth grade and into junior college. Provide for the introduction of economic education by subject matter, grade level, or both.

5. Design programs that can be institutionalized, i.e., include integral parts of the course study along with the basic subjects. In this way, the programs have a multiplier effect and yield a significant return on the original investment of time, money, and personnel resources.

6. Develop and continually support a delivery system making the program available to all interested school systems and educators.

7. Provide teacher training, assistance, and review.

8. Provide continuity and follow-up.

9. Build methods of evaluation and accountability, of both academic integrity and financial involvement, into every phase of the program.

All nine points are required for long-term, effective economic education in the classroom.

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4.

action letter

Sample letter for use with community leaders and groups interested in the development, maintenance, or improvement of local economic education programs:

Our local economic education action committee is planning this year's program. A meeting will be held on (*day, date, time,* and *place*) to explain details of proposed economic education programming and discuss its application in our schools. We need wide community support to implement the programming. Your suggestions are welcomed.

The principal items to be discussed are:

1. Developing a Community Action Program to coordinate community leaders' and educators' efforts to implement economic education programs.
2. Securing volunteers to talk with students about their economic roles in the community. Securing sponsored field trips to help students experience and understand the economics of their community. Securing audiovisual, printed matter, and other resources for use by local teachers.
3. Developing a program to secure adequate community funding for sponsored in-service teacher workshops.
4. Establishing a community information service to keep media informed about economic education programming activities.

Economic education programming provides many benefits. It provides teachers with information to help students understand and function within the economic system, increases students' ability to solve economic problems, and strengthens the curriculum.

We need your help and viewpoint to implement the program. Call (*telephone number*) and let me know if you will be joining us.

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5.

how to promote economic education in your community

1. CONTACT YOUR STATE COUNCIL ON ECONOMIC EDUCATION
Use the enclosed list of Affiliated Economic Education Directors and contact the nearest council or center director. The director will brief you about statewide economic education programming and how it can be implemented in your community schools. If local groups are currently involved in the program, determine how you can cooperate with their activities and promote economic education in your locale.

2. INFORM COMMUNITY EDUCATORS
Arrange to meet with your school superintendent, board members, and principals. Invite a member of the Council or Center to explain how the Council can implement this coordinated approach to economic education. Follow up with a question and answer session. Move for a commitment from the educators to get the program underway.

3. SEEK COOPERATION OF COMMUNITY LEADERS
After securing the educator's commitment, additional work within the comunity will improve the success of economic education programming in your school system. Committees or individuals should be appointed to accomplish the following activities. (See suggested committees—Exhibit A).

a. COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM COMMITTEE
This working committee of community leaders provides the ongoing leadership, management, and financial coordination required to maintain the economic education programming and support activities.

b. RESOURCE CENTER AND CLEARINGHOUSE
SPEAKERS AND RESOURCE PEOPLE: Secure the services of leaders in business, government, labor, and agriculture to discuss their roles in the community with students. They can show students how economic concepts are transferred to the real world of work.

COMMUNITY-IN-ACTION FIELD TRIPS: Solicit commitments by local business, government, and labor representatives to sponsor student field trips which help students experience and understand community economics.

CATALOG: Maintain listing of audiovisual and printed materials, their location and availability, for use by community teachers.

c. ECONOMIC EDUCATION WORKSHOPS FOR TEACHERS
In cooperation with the Affiliated Economic Education Director, develop financial resources to sponsor in-service workshops and seminars for teachers.

d. PUBLIC INFORMATION ACTIVITIES
Establish a Public Relations community service contact for local media—newspapers, radio, and television stations—civic groups, and others. Keep people informed of programming, why it is taking place, and what is being accomplished.

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6.

discussion starters

Questions often asked by audiences about economic education programs:

1. **Q. Why is economic education important?**
   A. As individuals, we are all asked to make decisions on crucial economic issues that affect our lives. These questions arise in our roles as consumers, workers, and citizens. By understanding our economic system and its operation, individuals can better comprehend how their decisions and actions affect the system. This knowledge improves their ability to make wise decisions.

2. **Q. Are economic fundamentals taught in our high schools?**
   A. Only about one quarter of the high schools offer an elective course in economics and less than 10 percent of all students are enrolled in the economics courses these schools offer.

3. **Q. What can be accomplished with systematic economic education programming?**
   A. Research shows that students enrolled in schools with an economic education program are:
   - 20 percent more likely to have higher levels of economic understanding than students without economic education.
   - 100 percent more likely to understand the idea of trade-offs.
   - 60 percent more likely to understand that inflation hurts everyone.
   - 25 percent more likely to know that in a market economy higher wages are directly related to worker productivity.
   - 25 percent more likely to understand the roles of competition and profits in a market economy.

   These results can be expected with economics programs which are systematic, infused in the curricula, and taught from kindergarten through high school. Input in each grade reinforces the previous economic knowledge learned and improves the student's understanding and analytical ability. They can apply the decision making process to more complex solutions as their aptitudes increase.

4. **Q. Does a consumer education course accomplish the same results as an economic education course?**
   A. Some consumer education courses include a review of economic principles, but generally they are more concerned with buying goods and services than conferring knowledge which can be applied to all decisions. Economic education helps the consumer understand how our economy works in addition to providing information about the supply, demand, and price functions of the market and their relation to personal decisions.

5. **Q. What materials are available to teach economics?**
   A. A variety of materials can be secured from the Joint Council on Economic Education. The informative publication, "A Framework for Teaching Economics," identifies basic economic concepts and discusses how each concept can be taught. "Strategies Guides" contain teaching suggestions and tested classroom activities, for all grades, applicable to consumer and business education, American and world history, and other subjects. Fifteen 20-minute film programs, titled "Trade-Offs," are available for classroom use in Grades 4 through 7. Additional film series are being produced for other

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6. **Q. What other materials are available?**

A. Additional materials are available in most communities from business, industry, labor, agriculture, and government sources. These teaching resources may include personal involvement in the classroom, speakers, panels, field trips, career information, audiovisual aids, all types of printed materials, curriculum advice and enrichment, and the funding of in-service teacher training.

7. **Q. What is the State Department of Education doing to increase the amount of economics taught in our schools?**

A. Many state departments of education, realizing the need for increased economic understanding on the part of citizens, are taking action to insure that economics is taught in public schools. However, any concerned community citizen group can work with school officials and teachers to infuse economic education into the curriculum.

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7.

benefits a cooperating school system secures:

1. Each cooperating school system receives a basic library of economic education materials including curriculum guides and specialized bibliographies. New items are added as they become available.

2. The school system receives a 40 percent discount on all Joint Council Checklist materials, when 10 or more items are ordered.

3. The school system obtains consultative help from economists and educators associated with the affiliated Council and cooperating universities.

4. Each school system becomes part of a national program which has high visibility and provides professional recognition.

5. The school system Coordinator of Economic Education receives the HANDBOOK FOR CURRICULUM CHANGE which provides concrete examples of communication, organization, budgeting, planning, in-service education, curriculum development, evaluation, and resource location.

6. Each local coordinator receives information about new materials, new programs, and useful suggestions about activities of other cooperating school systems.

7. Cooperating school personnel are invited to participate at conferences sponsored by the Joint Council and other cooperating national organizations, and are given priority consideration for new economic education fellowships and scholarships.

8. Personnel from cooperating schools are invited to state-wide meetings to share ideas and discuss solutions to problems.

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8.

keeping the community informed

News should be written to localize the information and make the releases more effective for your needs. Include a paragraph about your organization and its activities supporting economic education.

Review these basic steps before contacting local media:

1. Compile and frequently update your list of media contacts—names, addresses, phone numbers.

a. Newspapers: City Editor, Education Editor, Youth Editor
b. Weeklies and Shoppers: Editor
c. Radio-TV: Assignment Editor, News Director, Public Service Director

2. MAKING CONTACT If you know the individuals personally, contact them directly. Otherwise, mail the release to the proper person. Always provide a name, address, and phone number for the editor to contact for additional information.

3. FOLLOW-UP Allow sufficient time for the person to receive the release. A phone call can determine if the communication was received, and questions regarding the story can be answered. Ask if photo coverage would be appropriate at a future meeting or activity.

4. PHOTOGRAPHS Send clear, sharp, black and white glossy photographs with the caption attached. Photographs may be submitted with or without a news release.

5. INTERVIEWS Interviews for feature newspaper articles or when talking with radio or television people provide a means for one or more representatives from your organization to discuss your community economic education program.

6. OTHER COVERAGE Depending upon your area, copies of the release can be sent to the local Chamber of Commerce, school publications, business and industrial house organs, and labor publications.

Communicating through the media is the best way to keep all of the community informed about the plans, activities, and benefits of the economic education programming that is underway. There are always meetings, workshops, seminars, classroom activities, field trips, local speakers, and many other projects connected with economic education that provide "people interest" and follow-up stories and articles. Local people like to know what other local people are doing. Keep the media advised, but let them decide what is news and what rates a feature story.

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9.

activity flow
community economic education program

activity	responsibility of business community
1. Make initial contact: (a) Superintendent of Schools and/or (b) School Board Member	**1.** (a) Meet with Superintendent and/or (b) Meet with member(s) of the school board
2. Contact Council/Center for Economic Education	**2.** Call and arrange meeting with the closest Council or Center director to discuss methods of securing support from Superintendent and School Board
3. Secure support from: (a) Superintendent (b) School board	**3.** Make presentation to school board (contact local Center or Council for help). Possible recommendations for actions to be taken by school board are: • Make economic education a priority item in the district • Allocate resources for implementing economic education • Assign a Curriculum Supervisor or teacher to coordinate economic education activities in the the district
4. Goal/priority recommendation made to Superintendent by school board	**4.** • Support recommendation to implement economic education • Have local business leaders support the recommendation • Contact local civic organizations for their support
5. Program responsibility delegated to Assistant Superintendent for Instruction or the Curriculum Specialist by Superintendent	**5.** Have local Community Action Program representative contact responsible party and discuss program assistance

flow	activity	responsibility of business community
6	**6.** Conduct needs assessment	**6.** • Work with local Council or Center to develop both short-and long-range goals for implementing economic education in the district • Work with teachers to review and evaluate economic education
7	**7.** Organize and conduct initial in-service teachers workshops	**7.** • Have selected members of the Community Action Program Committee make appropriate presentations • Assist in funding the program • Contact all local schools and encourage teacher attendance • Work with Council or Center for Economic Education
8	**8.** Economic education integrated into the classroom	**8.** • Advise teachers of available community resources • Respond to requests for assistance
9	**9.** Provide for additional teacher training	**9.** • Work with Council or Center for Economic Education • Attend initial programs • Publicize the workshops or seminars • Support teacher training programs
10	**10.** Begin on-going curricula development in each grade when practical	**10.** • Work with Council or Center for Economic Education • Repeat activities 8, 9, and 10

In each step of the Community Action Program it is necessary to: (a) Identify the problem, (b) Decide on priorities, (c) Develop objectives, (d) Explore alternatives, (e) Select the best solution, (f) Implement the plan, (g) Evaluate the program, and (h) Alter program as necessary to make it more effective.

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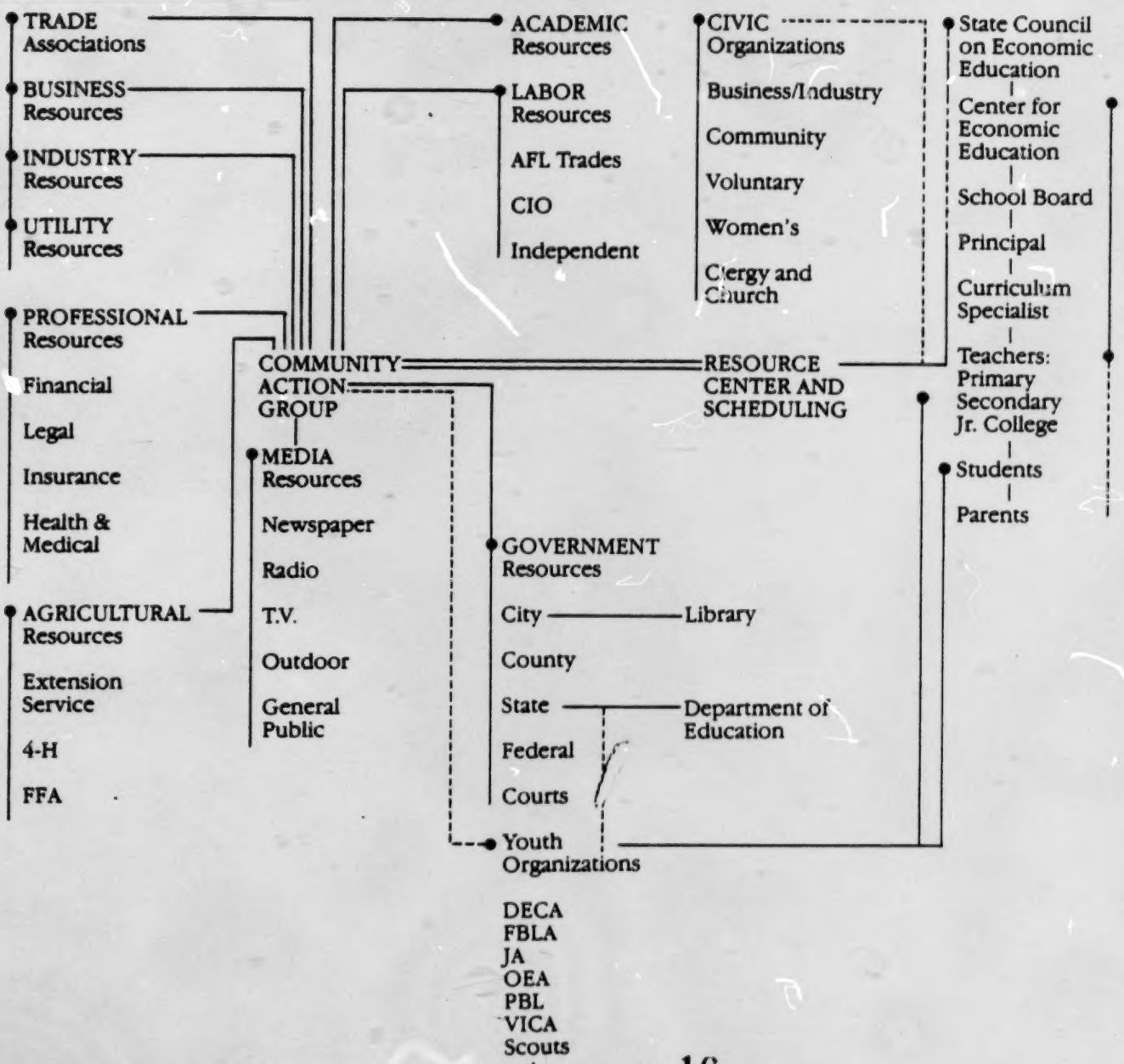
10.

community action program (cap)



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11.

exhibit A
community action program committees

1. Governing Body for CAP

Representatives from:

Business
Industry
Labor
Agriculture
Government
Education

2. Educational Liaison and Review

Analyze needs of educators

Disseminate information

Recommend financial and resource assistance

Assist in teacher training

Assist in coordination of curriculum development, improvement, infusion, and review

Assess materials, course, content, audience, and cost

Evaluate materials for relevancy, objectivity, adaptability, and information provided

3. Financial

Fund raising:

Provide teacher training
Secure resources

4. Community Resources Center

CLEARINGHOUSE ACTIVITIES

Scheduling and referral:
Business-Education Days
Education-Business Days
Career Development Days
Tours—office, plant, facility
Speakers
Panels
Printed materials
A/V materials

Student intern employment: school year, summer

Teacher employment: summer

Displays

5. Public Relations

Media contact

News Releases

6. Business and Industry

TRAINING

Volunteer professionals
Speakers
Field trips and tours
Materials
Teacher counseling
Community outreach

7. Honors and Awards Program

Teachers

Community service

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